

Normalcy Again by kaahiescheck

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Summary: "You're the most important thing to me in the world," he emphasized. "I know I kept you all to myself, but I thought that... maybe if you spent time with all these cool new people, you wouldn't wanna hang out with me anymore. I was scared I'd lose you." Her lips twitched. "You were crazy?" He blushed. "Yeah. Crazy." / Mileven getting back together, y'all.

Normalcy Again

Here's my take on Mileven's talk about getting back together. Writing this gave me other fic ideas that I'll probably get to in a bit, so be on the lookout for that!

They were watching *Star Wars – A New Hope* again.

Mike remembered when he'd first shown it to El. It had been the first time she had been allowed out of the cabin to visit him in his basement, over the winter holidays, and only because his parents had been out with Holly and Nancy had said she could chaperone. His Millennium Falcon had caught her attention and she'd asked about it. He'd already sort of explained the series to her, but she didn't remember much, so they'd settled down to watch it.

It felt natural to do it again now. It brought a sense of normalcy – the two of them on the basement couch, trying to pay attention to the small screen instead of each other. There was a bit of awkwardness in the air, and it reminded Mike of when the chief had given him the okay to tell his parents about her existence, after the New Year's.

"But don't make it too obvious, kid," Hopper warned. "You have to act like she just moved in with me, like you just met her. All of you. You can't act all... you know."

What he'd meant was that they couldn't act like they were dating already. All right, back *then*, it wasn't official yet, because Mike had still been trying to find the right way to talk about it with El. But they kissed occasionally and sat really close and shared looks that... yeah, the chief had been right, his mother would have seen right through it.

To be fair, she did see right through him, but probably thought it was some first love shit. Mike and El had tried, they really had, but they were like magnets. By Valentine's Day, they already were *that* couple and there was little Hopper could do to force them to take it slow.

The awkwardness was familiar to Mike because now he didn't know

how to proceed, exactly, and thinking about Hopper wasn't helping.

It had been a month, even though it felt so fresh. All the bureaucracy part was over at least – getting their stories straight, El moving in with the Byers, attending the chief's (and Billy's) funeral, avoiding people's questions. Life was getting back on track.

Except for one thing, of course. El had dumped his ass.

For his own sake, Mike had blocked out that moment, permanently. He was still aware it had happened, but her face and her words were censured in his brain. The problem was the blurred lines, everywhere.

In a crisis, yeah, of course they were right next to each other; helping, supporting, comforting. Bigger things were going on. Now, though, the dust had settled for the most part and... Mike still didn't know if they were broken up or if they'd gotten back together implicitly.

I mean, they hadn't *kissed*. Almost, a couple of times, when they'd found themselves so close and there had been a hitch in the conversation. It's not like he didn't want to, because he did, big time, and he *had* apologized and she had *looked* like she'd accepted it and she still went to him for comfort and to just hang out and he just didn't *know*.

Like right now.

Throughout the movie, they had been toeing the cuddling line. Mike wanted to put an arm around her to hold her close, but the most he could do was hold her hand. She was holding it back, so that was a good sign.

"Why don't they give her a... a lightsaber?" El asked as Luke, Han, and Chewbacca rescued Leia in the Death Star. "She's his sister."

Mike cocked his head to the side. "Well, they don't know that yet, do they? That's for the last movie."

"But they didn't give her then. You think she doesn't have powers?"

"I don't know," he answered truthfully, feeling her gaze on him. "Maybe. They're twins. They communicate and shit. We could, like, write a letter to George Lucas asking about it."

With the corner of his eye, he caught her frowning face and he looked over. "George Lucas. The guy who created all this. I know I told you about him."

The expression she made when she didn't know something was adorable most of the time, and this was no exception. Except he *knew* he'd told her this.

"Also created *Indiana Jones*?" he tried to joggle her memory. "That movie's shitty, but I know I talked to you about it. You don't... you don't remember?"

She shook her head, but there was a hint of a smile on her lips. "Didn't pay attention."

"Oh," he exclaimed, turning on his seat to face her better. "You mean you let me talk for hours – literal *hours* – and you don't remember any of it?"

By then, she looked a bit guilty, although she was trying not to laugh.

"El! It's not funny."

Her giggles burst out. Mike wanted to feel revolted that she hadn't paid attention to his *Star Wars* rants, but her laugh... yeah, he hadn't heard that in a while, at least not so genuinely. He found himself entranced by it – it took him back to their days in her room at the cabin, kissing and listening to music, when making her laugh was the easiest thing.

It must have hit her too, because her laughter slowly died out and then there were staring at each other.

He had to ask. He had to. He couldn't live in this uncertainty. He had to ask her, even if the words got stuck in his throat three times before he managed to blurt out, "El?"

She felt and saw the shift in him, and he saw and felt the shift in her.

"Are we..." Mike started. "Are we really... I mean, are we still... broken up? I mean," he shook his head. "I was an asshole. I know that. But I *am* sorry and I'm not... I'm not gonna do it again, okay? It was unfair to you. And I shouldn't have lied, even if... even if he made me do it. I should've just told you." He sighed. "He was just, like, *really* scary and he threatened to forbid me from seeing you. Ever. But I shouldn't have lied," he repeated.

It was risky to bring up Hopper, he knew. El's face fell a bit at the mention of him, but she recovered and considered Mike.

"You're the most important thing to me in the world," he emphasized. "I know I kept you all to myself, but I thought that... maybe if you spent time with all these cool new people, you wouldn't wanna hang out with me anymore. I was scared I'd lose you."

Her lips twitched. "You were crazy?"

He blushed. "Yeah. Crazy." *For you.*

His heart was racing so much that it might jump out of his chest at any moment. Maybe now was the right time to tell her. But then again, it might sound too desperate, like he was saying it just to get her back.

"Mike." It wasn't a question, just his name, that way El said it sometimes before something important. "I understand."

What exactly she understood, he was afraid of asking. She understood his feelings, because she felt the same? Or she just understood his reasoning? But did that mean she would take him back or that he was simply forgiven?

For a moment, he wanted to be mad at Max, because he knew she had filled El's ears with bullshit about him. It was great that they were friends, just not when they were conspiring against him. But then he told himself to take a deep breath and focus on things he could control.

"I don't like being broken up," he said in a low voice. "It sucks."

El's eyes were big. "I don't like it either."

"Okay," he breathed out in relief and felt his lips slowly forming a smile. "So... does that mean...?"

She wanted to smile as well.

"I just really wanna kiss you," Mike said without thinking.

And she didn't stop him. In fact, she met him halfway and her right hand found his cheek. His fingers caressed her raised forearm, keeping her close even as their lips disconnected and connected again and again and again.

"MIKE! I MADE SOME SNACKS, DO YOU GUYS WANT SOME?"

His mother's voice travelled down from the kitchen through the halfway open basement door (that was a rule), as it did oftentimes, breaking the two apart. They had both been munching on candy ever since they'd sat down to watch the movie, so Mike knew El wasn't hungry and, really, could his mom have *worse* timing?

He inhaled and turned his head. "NOT NOW, MOM!"

"I BOUGHT THE NORMAL COKE."

"WE'RE WATCHING THE MOVIE."

"I CAN BRING IT DOWN."

"NOT. NOW!"

She didn't offer anything else, for which Mike was thankful. As he sighed and turned back to his girlfriend, he found her giggling. He rolled his eyes and tried to kiss her again, something that was made impossible by her laughter. He complained and whined until she took pity on him, and then they were kissing properly.

"You're not gonna lose me," El reassured him, when they took a break and were just touching foreheads.

"I almost did. So many times."

"I'm okay." She paused. "And I wanna hang out with you, even if I

have other friends."

It didn't completely make his worries go away, but hearing her say it calmed him down somewhat. He pulled her lips back to his to maybe show her what he couldn't say yet, even though he wasn't sure he wanted her to understand the depths of his feelings or not.

Most of the movie was ignored, but eventually they got back to it, this time actually cuddling.